FROM THE GLOBAL BEAT OF THE BOROUGHS SERIES

BADENYA

MANDEN JALIYA IN NEW YORK CITY

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
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Originally from Mali, Guinea, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau, these artists are now part of the global beat of New York City's music scene. Though their music has a distinctively contemporary Afropop sound, they are all jalilu—practitioners of ancient performance traditions dating back to the 13th-century Empire of Mali. This exquisite recording showcases singing by masters of the soaring vocal style of jaliya and virtuoso instrumental playing on the bala, kora, n'goni, tambin, djembe, dundun, guitar, and bass. A testimony to the vitality and creativity of immigrant communities in America, this music and its performers seamlessly combine contemporary life in urban New York with ancient African traditions.

EXTENSIVE NOTES, PHOTOS, 11 TRACKS, 65 MINUTES.

1 FAKOLI (MALI) 6:03  2 JIGIYA (MALI) 6:52
3 KINZAN (GUINEA/MALI) 6:03  4 NANFULEN (GUINEA/MALI) 6:45
5 JANJON (MALI) 5:57
6 SIDI YELLAH (GAMBIA) 6:20  7 SORI KEMEDON (GUINEA) 5:12
8 KEME BUREMA (GUINEA) 5:00  9 ALLAH L'A KE (GUINEA-BISSAU) 5:14
10 DINIYA (GUINEA) 6:25  11 DJIU DE GALINHA (GUINEA-BISSAU) 5:44

Produced by the Center for Traditional Music and Dance
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Manden Jaliya in New York City
by Tom van Buren

This recording presents the sound of the collective energy and artistry shared by a unique network of musicians and singers living in New York City. Hailing from the nations of Mali, Gambia, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau, they are united by the common cultural heritage of the Manden world of West Africa. The artists are all jalili (sing. jali), members of a hereditary musical caste whose ancestry and artistic lineage go back to the 13th century. Now they make their homes in New York City and have recast the deep traditions of their culture into a contemporary setting, employing time-honored musical practices while embellishing their music with new sounds, lyrical subjects, and innovative musical ideas.

Since 1997, these musicians have been participants in a program called Badenya, which grew out of collaboration among the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, artists, and Manden community arts advocates in New York City. From 1997 to 2000, the collaboration produced four major concerts of African music in venues from East Harlem to Lincoln Center. Among the performances presented, the Manden form and repertoire known as jalinya was a key expression. Some of the finest exponents of this art form in New York City now appear on this album.

Jaliya in the Manden World

The social and artistic origin of the jalili lies in the founding of the Empire of Mali in A.D. 1225 under the rule of Sunjata Keita. United from the remnants of the northern kingdom of ancient Ghana (ca. 700 to 1076), this empire covered a large part of the Sahel, the savanna southwest of the Sahara. It united peoples from the forests of present-day Ivory Coast in the south to the city of Teghazza at the edge of the Sahara in the north, and from the western Atlantic coast to Timbuktu in the east. (See map.) These societies had long established an economic base in the trade of salt from the north and

The Empire of Mali at its greatest extent during the reign of Mansa Souleyman, grandson of Sunjata Keita, ca. A.D. 1350. Shading illustrates linguistic areas.
gold from the south. The empire controlled the key routes and access to sources of these goods. The faith of Islam spread along these routes from North Africa, across the Sahara and throughout the savanna to the south of the desert.

Internally, the Empire of Mali developed a system of keeping records, genealogy, and history. The *jallitu* played a key role in this system. The establishment of a hereditary caste of oral historians, orators, counselors, mediators, and musicians was a hallmark of Sunjata’s new order. Manden society had been divided into castes, including the *horon*, the landed farming and warrior class, and the *nyamakala*, hereditary clans of specialized craft professions, including blacksmiths, carpenters, and leather workers. Among the *nyamakala* were “wordsmiths,” the *jallitu* and the *finahlu*, charged with matters pertaining to verbal arts, memory, the resolution of conflicts, and official presentations. The role of the *jallitu* has been immensely important in Manden society, because they deal in matters of dispute, rumor, history, and justice. They and the *finahlu* possess specialized knowledge and command of spiritual and social matters, including impurities that account for the evil and discord in the world. The word *nyama* in Malinke also means “garbage.” The term *nyamakala* thus also refers to one who resolves problems or removes evil or impure energies, as a mediator of conflicts.

Manden society is united around the lineage of family and community, exemplified by the concept of *badenya*. This Malinke word denotes the bond of mother and child, but it symbolizes the wider bonds of heritage and community obligation. *Jallitu* celebrate this notion of community through the maintenance of propriety and the reverence for heritage. At the same time, they sing epic ballads and moral tales of heroic ventures abroad, motivated by the contrasting male concept of *fadenya*, which symbolizes the forces of conflict and competition, and which must be mitigated for the common good.

The origin of the *jali* caste is described in the Epic of Sunjata, the primary historical text learned and sung by *jallitu* in ballads and recitations about the founding of the empire. One of the first written translations was made by African historian D. T. Niane, from a version sung by *jali* Mamadou Kouyate in the 1950s. According to this version, when Sunjata’s father, Naré Maghan, was at the end of his life, he presented the young prince with a *jali* named Balafaseke, saying: “From his mouth you will hear the history of your ancestors and you will learn the art of governing Mali according to the principles which our ancestors have bequeathed to us” (Niane 1960:17). In addition to the role of oral historian and counselor, the *jali* was a musician. Citing the same epic, *jali* Abou Sylla (who appears on this recording) explained: “The first *bala* [xylophone] was that of Sumaoro Kanté, the first king of Mali. This king made his *bala* as a fetish. He was his own *jali*. After the battle at Kirina, Sunjata took everything. He took this *bala* and gave it to Balafaseke who became the ancestor of the Kouyates [a prominent jali family].” These stories recount the historical origin of the empire, its social order, and the *jallitu*’s place within it. Jali Mamadou Kouyate described his role as follows: “We are the repositories, which harbor secrets many centuries old. The art of eloquence has no secrets for us. Without us the names of kings would vanish into oblivion. We are the memory of mankind. By the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations” (Niane 1960:1).

At the end of the 16th century, the Empire of Mali suffered from internal divisions and succumbed to challenges from the neighboring Fulani people, but its legacy has continued to influence the region and its diaspora. As a political entity, Mali was defeated
at the battle of Jenne in 1599, and split apart. The practice of *jaliya* had spread throughout the Empire, and *jali lu* continued to serve the powers and dynasties that dominated the various kingdoms within the former empire. The repertoire of regional *jali lu* reflected the perspectives and ensuing histories of the different regions. Thus, the *jali lu* of the Gambia in the west often include songs about their historical leaders, such as "Kelefa ba," the praise-song for the first king of the western Mandinka Empire, and "Keme Burema," a song about the French government’s betrayal of the son of Samori Touré, the anticolonial leader of the southern Wassalou people, who briefly reunited the Mali Empire in the 1870s.

The Manden world was diminished further by Portuguese incursions into what is now Guinea-Bissau beginning in the 15th century, more than three centuries of the Atlantic slave trade, and conquest and direct rule by the French and British after the European division of Africa in 1885–86. The Europeans violently challenged physical resistance to their rule, and targeted the *jali lu* because of the social power of their role as keepers of history, knowledge, and custom.

With the dissolution of the center of local traditional power, there emerged newer accommodations to colonial domination, such as the Islamic Mouride brotherhoods—social and economic organizations of the late 19th and 20th century in what is now Senegambia. Centered in the northern district of Fouta and Cayor, and the cities of Touba and Tambacounda, the brotherhoods were led by religious leaders known as marabouts, and are rooted in the teachings of African Muslim saints. Since the colonial period, some brotherhoods developed a strong mercantile component throughout West Africa. These continue to exert significant influence in postcolonial African society.

Meanwhile, the *jali lu* were left to subsist on the village level, or to attempt to expand their role and repertoire as modern musical entertainers. Over the past century, they have adapted their roles to contemporary settings, but many have crossed over into popular urban settings, and have established successful international careers.

**The Manden Community of New York**

From the late 1970s onward, significant numbers of African people have been migrating to New York from Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and the Ivory Coast, and in lesser numbers from the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. By the mid 1990s, a thriving network of communities had been established throughout New York City, but most notably in Harlem and the Bronx. The Manden communities of New York are known by national origin and linguistic and ethnic group. The languages spoken in the Manden region are Wolof and Serer in Senegal, Susu and Fula in Guinea, Mandinka/Malinke and Soninke in the Gambia and Mali, and the Bambara/Bamana dialect of Malinke (the term used in Mali for *Mandinka*) in eastern Mali. To the south, regional languages of northern Sierra Leone, such as Kuranko, are part of the linguistic complex.

The Manden communities of New York City were first established by immigrants from Senegal and the Gambia. Senegalese forged a path to New York in the early 1980s, establishing an economic base in networks of street vendors, whose organization was controlled by the Mouride Islamic brotherhoods. The brotherhoods aided in the process of migration and the establishment of communities abroad. Certain brotherhoods became dominant in different countries and cities. Long before the New York migration, the brotherhoods of Fouta and Tambacounda led in the Senegalese settlement in France.
and other parts of Europe. In New York, the vendors were highly organized through the Hul Pular brotherhood in Brooklyn and the Modou-Modou brotherhood from Baol and Cayor in Harlem. The vendors received assistance in obtaining visas, transportation, and lodging in southern Harlem; they also received financing and access to wholesale merchandise.

English-speaking Gambians began to arrive in New York during the early 1980s, often through similar channels as the Mouride vendors had followed. The Gambians included distinct subgroups, including Mandinka, Soninke, and Sarakoulay, who came in search of work or trade opportunities and settled at first in Manhattan single-room-occupancy hotels or with friends. Eventually, Gambians began to settle in the Bronx, where they established a significant community with religious leaders and mutual-aid organizations, such as the Gambian Society of New York.

Immigration from other Manden countries followed two paths, according to language. English-speakers from Liberia settled predominantly on Staten Island, while immigrants from Sierra Leone settled primarily in Queens. Settlers from the Francophone West African nations of Guinea, Mali, and the Ivory Coast have arrived more recently, as immigration to France was substantially curtailed in the 1990s, and as other earlier migrants from these areas began to establish the community infrastructure and contacts necessary to permit wider settlement. These groups tended to follow the Senegalese into Harlem and go from there into the Bronx.

The communities of Mandinka, Wolof, Susu, and Fula peoples are found in Harlem, the west Bronx, parts of Queens, central Brooklyn, and the Richmond Hill area of Staten Island. Population statistics are quite unreliable, given the significant number of undocumented people, and the lack of distinction in the census among the communities and cultures in subsaharan Africa. Recent census and immigration statistics suggest that the Manden population of New York is approximately twenty thousand. Each national community maintains one or more active community associations, including the Guinean Sigiri regional association and the Haute Conseil des Maliens de New York. The Wolof and French-language "African Time" radiobroadcast, the Sierra Leone Times newspaper, and other community media also have a local presence.

Jaliya in New York

Since the 1980s, jaliyu have visited the Manden communities of New York City. Some of these musicians arrived in the company of touring bands and dance troupes and have made New York their permanent place of residence. Since 1990, there has been a marked increase in the numbers of jaliyu, particularly from Francophone West Africa. Their knowledge of African and European languages, experience with travel, and facility with music and storytelling make them natural cultural ambassadors of the Manden world. Jaliyu residing in New York City recognize the legacy of their ancestors' historical role, but they also reflect the intermediary colonial and postcolonial experiences of West Africa. Most of them have traveled or resettled within Africa before coming to the United States, experiencing the effects of urbanization and nationalism there. They have been involved daily in adapting the legacy of their caste role to the conditions facing their communities in new contexts, in Africa and the United States.

Of the jaliyu who have migrated to the United States, many maintain links to their former role in Manden society, and yet there is a significant historical and psychic
distance between the period in which their caste originated and the present day. The
descendants of ancient Mali in New York City share a common history, the Malinke lan-
guage, and a musical and oral tradition. In ceremonies, community gatherings, and
public events, jaliyu still recite the histories, customs, and genealogies of the Manden
peoples; they sing praises to patrons, help resolve social conflicts, and entertain. In
these ways, they maintain ties between the migrant communities and their home cul-
tures, while establishing new contacts and bonds among their communities, other ethnic
groups, and the general public life of New York City.

The Songs

The songs on this album present a range of jaliyu as it is practiced in New York City.
They cover a historical frame of almost eight centuries, depicting the history of the
founding of the Empire of Mali, treating 19th-century subjects, and developing contem-
porary themes. These songs are all good examples of how New York–based jaliyu draw
from deep tradition, combine musical ideas and instruments from the range of their his-
tory and experience, and bring their culture to life on a daily basis.

The first five selections, “Fakoli,” “Jigiya,” “Kinzan,” “Nanfulen,” and “Janjon,”
present the sound of Super Manden, an ensemble backing the voices of Abdoulaye
Diabate and Adjratou Tapani Sissoko of Mali. They offer examples of the oldest reperto-
ire from the Sunjata epic, as well as modern songs of praise, counsel, and blessing.
They were arranged collaboratively by Diabate and bala player Abou Sylla. Except for
“Janjon,” the songs were recorded in a single session at Ornette Coleman’s Harmolodic
Studios in East Harlem. This session seems to express a magical fusion of ancient and
modern African experiences and cultural sensibilities.

The remaining pieces on the album fill out the compilation with a range of per-
formers who offer a wider perspective on the Manden sound and experience in New
York. These include Mahamadou Salieu Susso’s “Sidi Yellah,” in which he sings of the
good works of a 20th-century religious leader. The bala artistry of Abou Sylla and
Famoro Diabate shines through in their duet, “Sori Kemedon,” evoking the historical
precedent of their instrument as the first to be associated with jaliyu. Master tambin
flutist Bah Baillo performs “Keme Burema,” a song that addresses the sorrow of the
colonial experience as the French defeated the great leader Samori Touré by persuad-
ing his own son to betray him. “Diniya,” a percussion-based vocal song arranged by
Abou Sylla and sung by Djefalima Diabate of Guinea, exhorts youth to mind their elders
and their responsibility.

Finally, the album offers a range of the extraordinary work of kora player and
singer Keba Bobo Cissoko of Guinea-Bissau, who has inspired audiences and fellow
musicians in New York with his powerful vocal style and the deep pathos of his words.
He performs a traditional invocation, “Allah l’a Ke,” known to all jaliyu of the western
Manden world, and the closing “Dju de Galinha,” an anticolonial protest song by singer
Jose Carlos, adapted in New York to evoke memories of Africa and appeal for peace.
Cissoko shows here that the jaliyu of New York are as mindful of the present circum-
stances of their community as they are grounded in the great moral and dramatic tra-
ditions of the Manden and Islamic past.

The instruments in the recording are classic Manden lutes and idiophones. These
include the n’goni lute of Mali, played here by Fousseny Kouyate; this is the oldest type
of instrument of the ensemble, dating to the hunters’ lutes of Old Mali. The bala, an equieptatonic (tuned in equally spaced seven-tone scales) xylophone, is the most widespread instrument of the Manden region, where it is played alone, in multiple-part bala ensembles, and ensembles of mixed instruments. The twenty-one-string kora, perhaps the best known of the instruments, is played mainly in the western Manden region; the most recently developed, it was first documented in the 18th century. The end-blown tambin flute originated with the Fulani people in what is now western Mali and northern Guinea; performance involves extensive overblowing and singing through the flute, making it an ideal instrumental translation of the vocal repertoire.

Over time, these four instruments have come together in various ensembles, in which musicians have developed modes of interplay, as exemplified on this recording. This interplay surrounds and carries the vocal performance without drowning out words. The djembe and kenkeni drums heard on “Diniya” and “Janjon” were traditionally played for dance, rather than for jaliya, but are now commonly included within ensembles. In many of these performances, the guitar and the bass serve the same musical function as the traditional instruments, as they subtly modernize the sound without resorting to electronic effects and sophisticated editing. The spontaneous strength of jaliya performance shines through.

The Artists

Abdoulaye Diabate (vocal) is a member of an eminent family of jaliya from Kela, in the Bambara linguistic region in southern Mali. He received jaliya training from his father, Yamadu Diabate, and other family members. He learned the guitar and popular styles from his brother, the well-known singer Kasse Mady. In 1973, he moved to Bamako to perform with the Tentemba Jazz Band and the Koule Star Band of Kouchala. He also performed with Mory Kante, Salif Keita, Ousmane Kouyate, and Kante Manfila. In 1976, he moved to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where he founded his own twelve-piece band, Super Manden; two years later, he released its first recording, Wahabia-Ke Daschi, and he performed with it throughout the 1980s. In 1992, he joined the world-renowned Ensemble Koteba under the direction of Souleymane Koli as a singer and guitarist, and in 1996, he accompanied the popular female vocal trio Les Trois Gis with this ensemble for a North American tour. Since coming to America, he has been a participant in the New
York and East Coast African music scene, and has reformed his Super Manden band with musicians from Mali and Guinea.

**Abou Sylla (bala)** is from Kindia, a district capital in the southern coastal area of Guinea. Born into a local jali family, he learned the bala from the age of seven, and began performing with his father. In 1980, he was invited to join Les Ballets Africains, the national dance-company of Guinea. He worked with the company for two years, but illness forced him to return home. In 1990, after a long period of recovery, he rejoined Les Ballets Africains under the direction of Aleppa Bangoura and artistic director Mohamed Kemoko Sano. Sylla also performed with Sano's company, Les Merveilles d'Afrique. In 1992, he joined Les Ballets Africains to perform an extended choreography entitled Silò ("The Path") on a European tour. In 1993, the company brought the same program to the United States. Sylla returned to the U.S. with Les Merveilles d'Afrique in 1995 and settled in New York. Since then, he has been performing and teaching Manden music in workshops and residencies throughout the United States.

**Keba Bobo Cissoko (kora and vocal)** was born in the Bafata region of Guinea-Bissau and began learning the kora at an early age from family members, including his grandfather, Bouly Gelissa. In 1981, he moved to Conakry, Guinea, where he joined the National Instrumental Ensemble. He also formed his own band, Le Tamalalou ("The Traveler"). In 1986, he met Kemoko Sano, the choreographer of Les Ballets Africains, who widened his musical practice from the jaliya repertoire to the more diverse styles of performance required of a national repertory ensemble, in which performers play several instruments and take dramatic roles from different regions. Cissoko learned to play other instruments, including the dundun bass drum, the djembe, and the balafon, and in 1989, he joined Les Ballets Africains. After six years in the company, he toured Europe and the United States. In 1996, he settled in New York, where he rejoined Les Merveilles d' Afrique. He is noted for an emphatic singing style and florid kora playing. In 1998, he founded a New York-based version of his Le Tamalalou. The band joins jaliya and North American musicians in a combination that translates the western Manden repertoire into an interculturally accessible music.

**Adjaratou “Tapani” Sissoko** (vocal) was born in the city of Kaye, Mali, in 1972. Her father was a drummer and her mother a singer. She grew up learning the jali repertoire and role. As a teenager, she was recruited into the National Instrumental Ensemble of Mali. After several years, she joined Kandia Kouyate’s group but continued to perform with Sekouba Bambino in Africa and Sekouba Kandia Kouyate in Guinea and New York. She has toured with Toumani Diabate in Europe and the United States. She now resides in New York City, where she performs for the Malian community with Super Manden and other ensembles of jaliya.

**Mahamadou Salieu Suso (kora and vocal)** grew up in Kerewan, Gambia. He began to play the kora at the age of eight, studying and later performing with his father. During the 1980s, he traveled and performed in Nigeria and other areas of West Africa, and in Europe. In 1989, he came to New York to join the Papa Suso Manding Music and Dance Society. In 1994, he founded African Jaliya Kafo, an ensemble of Gambian jaliya who
have performed at Gambian community events and major festivals. In 1992, he recorded his own album, *Griot*, for Lyrichoir Discs, from which the selection on this album was taken. He has also collaborated on various projects with African-American artists, including guitarist James "Blood" Ulmer and the poet Jayne Cortez, whose album *Taking the Blues Back Home* features his kora playing.

**Bah Bailo** (*tambin*) is from a musical family of the Peule ethnicity of the Fulani region of Guinea. His mother is Vietnamese, and his father met her while serving in the French colonial army in Indochina in the 1940s. Bailo learned to play the *tambin*, the traditional Fulani end-blown flute, from his grandfather in his home village. One day his grandfather called the townspeople together to declare his retirement from playing and the succession of his grandson to his art and tradition. During the ceremony marking this occasion, Bailo played through the night until sunrise. At the age of fifteen, he left his village to go to Dakar, Senegal, to find work as a musician. He remained there for several years, performing extensively in traditional and contemporary contexts. He also traveled throughout the Manden region, performing in the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone. In the late 1970s, he relocated to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where he was invited to join the Ballets Koteba, to work alongside Abdoualye Diabate. He participated in numerous productions of the company, including the recent Manden opera, *Waramba*. He has also performed at festivals, on recordings, and on world tours. In 2000, he relocated to New York City.

**Famoro Dioubate** (*bala*) is from Kankan, in the heart of the Manden region of Northeastern Guinea. He is a grandson of the legendary Djeli Sory Kouyate, one of the most renowned musicians in Guinea, and the leader of the National Instrumental Ensemble of Guinea during the 1960s and 70s. Like his grandfather, Famoro Dioubate is a master of the *bala*. He also performed with contemporary musical ensembles and artists from Guinea and Mali, including Sekouba Bambino, Mory Kanté, and Sekouba Kandia Kouyate. He participated in artistic residencies in France in 1994, and since coming to New York City in 1999, he has collaborated in educational programs at the Juilliard School. He is a regular performer with Keba Cissoko’s Tamalalou and with Sekouba Kandia Kouyate, with whom he has also recorded.
1. FAKOLI (MALI)
Super Manden: Abdoulaye Diakite, voice; Abou Sylla, bala; Fousseyou Kouyaté, n’goni; Yakouba Sissoko, kor; Mamadou Diakite, kor; Cheik Barry, bass; Moussa Sissoko, guitar
A song of the Sunjata epic cycle about a key ally to the emperor, the sorcerer and warrior Fakoli.

Ahye síla bila: Fakoli natonin; mofa fonné aikun. / Ahye síla bilasa; soómalu natò Nyañwelenbe sëbë leye aikun. / Malien nuyé nankama mín kòfòla; wo bëlebèle lenin ñidë. / Laimë kalyë nankama mín kòfòla; wo bëlebèle le bëaranà. / Ivoiri nuyé nankama mín kòfòla. / Wo bëlebèle lenin ñidë. / Tynala mókana bila Fakoli la Maninka kè të silan nàdé. / Korëndò móóyë diáfaba mënëllë, wò dianà wòt sëllà. / Telebe móóyë diáfaba mënëllë, wò dianà wòt sëllà. / Mèi këñëmbà tashibali këñëmbà, hankëli mëkônmëla wòt nà mînàla. // N’basfò tunyèlë mókàna bila Manden kalu, Maninka kè të silan nàdé. / Bila koroma dì mólà bòn biri-biri, Adì mòlà lò yërò këbl. / Fakolì dì mólà bòn biri-biri; aledi mólàbò yërò këbl Fakolì të silan nàdé. // Tunyèlë mókàna bila Fakolìla, Maninka kè të silan nàdé...

Clear the way: Fakoli is coming; he has great and magical powers. / Clear the way; the sorcerers are coming. / The veteran sorcerers carry amulets. / Malian notables talk of someone with great experience and dexterity. / Guinean notables talk of someone with great experience and dexterity: here he is. / Ivoiri talk of someone with great experience and dexterity: that is true; don’t provoke him; Maninka people are not afraid. / That which your enemies do will not affect you. / That which the people from the West do will not affect you. / Ignorant people and ingrates can be set on the right path by wise leaders. // I say that that is true. Don’t provoke the Maninka, they are not afraid. / Fakoli can cast his enemies aside; he can stop a person in his tracks. // That is the truth; don’t provoke him; Maninka people are not afraid...

2. JIGIYA (MALI/BAMBARA)
Adjaratou Tapani Sisoko, voice, with Super Manden (see track 1)
A praise-song sung to a benefactor.

Jigiya nyuma nyo koite, nate moro min fe. / Nate moro min fe, jigit lu funo ke nyo man te moro min fe. / Wolo den nyo man te moko min fe. / Nate moro mina jigitila Bolome nyuman to moke mina. / Anye tele min no bi tele juguba; ni jigitte moko mina ika dinya mandi. / Jigiya nyuma nyo ke koite, nate moro min fe. / Ahah, ah, ibara tunya fo: / Jaliimus jigiya te mano mina. / Tapa wo tigi te dunya diyabo...

If you don’t have support, life is not good. / Your life is difficult; you have to have support. / Children need support, for life to be good. / Support of family is good. / The sun shines down and gives us life; we need support like that to live. / If you don’t have support, life is not good. // Yes, yes, listen to these words: / The jaliimus [Tapani Sisoko] sings of support. / Tapa knows the truth...

3. KINZAN (GUINEA/MALI)
Adjaratou Tapani Sisoko, voice, with Super Manden
A song about coming of age and courtship in Mali. The name kinzan, from the French quinze ans (fifteen years), refers to a rhythm and dance associated with coming-of-age ceremonies.

Naluyé goroya makalana Sudan, fo alyé Malien musolé fudu. / Koko-koko dalaka, dalaka cheriho, Allah leno ila diya n’nyé. / N’ko nacy goroya makalana Sudan, fo alyé Guineen musolé fudusa. / Naluyé goroya makalana Sudan, fo alyé, Gambia musolé fudu. / Naluyé goroya makalana Sudan, fo alyé. / Abijan musolé fudu. / Koko-koko dalaka, dalaka cheriho, Allah leno ila diya n’nyé dé. // N’ko sanu mara mansa, ani wori mara mansa. / Hërô musso kankanleli n’nye wolé nyinina. / Sonin mara mansa, ani wori mara mansa. / Buna adama kankanleli n’nye wolé nyinina ha da dalaka n’nyé. / Allah diyanam dalaka, bë nakam dalaka. // Saa muluku musso dalaka dalaka cheriho Allah leno ila diya n’nyesaa.
If you want a certain status in Sudan, you have to marry a Malian woman. / My dear, my dear, open the door, it's thanks to God that I have your love. / If you want a certain status in Sudan, you have to marry a Guinean woman. / If you want a certain status in Sudan, you have to marry a Gambian woman. / If you want a certain status, you have to marry a woman from Sudan. / If you want a certain status, you have to marry a woman from Abijan. / My dear, it's God's will that I love you. / Some are rich in gold or money, but I am looking for someone who is sincere. / Some are rich in gold or money, but I am looking for someone who is sincere. / Open the door to me. The one whom God loves, open the door. Someone admired by all, open the door. Someone graceful like a serpent, open the door. / My dear, it is God's will that I love you.

4. NANFULEN (GUINEA/MALI)
Abdoulaye Diallo, voice, with Super Manden

A 20th-century anthem of celebration of freedom, this version is sung as a praise-song to a patron in Abijan.

I lye n'malon te, n'malon ho. / Adama denula mana mana kuma wolenô mògô tininya mòma, Woyo nanfulen. / Ah, Djaka, la malo mandînye kinihil dusu fé tanti / I lye n'malon tan, n'malon ho. / Bimôlô mana mana kuma wolenô mògô tininya mòma, Woyo nanfulen. / Kamara bana, la malo mandînye Kinihil dusu-fê, nanfulen. / Konye wala Djaka bara / N'ko n'ne wat Djaka lefê fina den kuru bê jigiyi leledi. // Woyo nanfulen. / Ah Djakala kasi mandînye / Kinihil dusu-fê tanti. / I bembà kôrôma nara sookê sarakadi. // Bê lađuaba diabari lema. / Kamara, musu ledi. // Lolo n'mari tallah bê kàira kura kinyê / N'mana karifa ila / Kôônidana n'malô bi wo fo n'nye. / M'bара miri m'bara miri m'bara kôôrô ban / N'ne nyante n'fila nin nyôna / Ja saya ye tunyadi. / M'bara miri m'bara miri m'bara kôôrô ban. / N'ne nyante n'wolo na bêrêla. Ja saya manyi / Allah biri bunyê, jon ti dôyala / Famalé Allah di latè ka kôrô jôndi woyi...

I don't know, I don't know. / The loose words people say undermine the trust between us, nanfulen. / I don't want to disgrace you, Djaka; don't be angry with people, madam. // The Kamara [the clan of Djakal], I don't want to disgrace you, nanfulen. / Don't be angry with people. / I am going to visit Djaka. I am going to be near Djaka. / All the finalu have confidence in her. // Nanfulen. / Don't be angry with people, madam. / Your ancestors have sacrificed for you. / So that good things will come to you. / Kamara, you are a great woman. // Every day, God grants you goodness. // I confide in you, but if you know you will disgrace me later, let me know. / I have reflected on it again and again until I can do no more. / I don't see my confidante. / Death is absolute. / I have reflected again and again until I can no more. / I don't see my mother anymore. Death is terrible. / God respects you as no one else can. / God is great, destiny is (older) greater than oneself.

5. JANJON (MALI)
Abdoulaye Diallo, voice: Aïtou Sylla, bala, dundun; Famango Djoboute, bala; Yacouba Sabasakoso, kom; Foussey Kouyaté, n'goni; Peter Fandé, bass; Rodé Bangoura, djembe

Another song of the Sunjata Epic cycle of the founding of the Empire of Mali, about the heroic struggle of Sunjata Keita. Janjon is a term for a popular dance rhythm.

Jan jonba...
6. SIDI YELLAH (GAMBIA)
Mamadou Sulei Susso, kora and voice.

(Courtesy of Lyricord Discs)
A modern eulogy to Sidi Aidara, a highly regarded religious and community leader in Gambia, during the 1920s.

Sara gallau, sara gallau, bai nal kof wonunu, sara gallau. / Sidi yellah, Sidi yellah, kara Burama fama alene Sidi kumbo. / Sidi yellah, Sidi yellah, Sidi yellah, Sahel linko. / Sara galla, Sara galla, Sara galla, Sara galla, wo, Sara gallah bai nal kof wonunu, sara gallah. / Aidara banin Quræes nin banin Has Minka alina sidifo kumba Aidara. / Sidifobere lamir, Sidifobere, lamir, Aidara ah, Sidi yellah. / Sidifo yellah lumen dibo dunta sanji manke. / Satano lu luba kumbo la Sidi yellah, Ji no lu kumbo la Sidi yellah. / Jinolu bakumba la Subhana Allahi-wa...

Indeed he was, indeed he was a scholar of the Qur'an. / Sidi has died, Sidi has died, the father of the Marabout Ibrahim has died. / Sidi has died, Sidi has died, Sidi from the Sahel has died. / Indeed he was, indeed he was a scholar of the Qur'an. / He was kin to Muhammad from Qurarse and from Has Minka, in the region of Mecca, let's mourn for Aidara / Sidi lay down, Sidi lay down, Sidi has died. / The day Sidi died, a dark cloud covered the Earth / Even Satan and the jinn are mourning too; Sidi has died. / All the jinn give praise to Allah...

7. SORI KEMEDON (GUINEA)
Abou Sylla, Famoso Dioufate, bala: xylophone duet.

One bala is played without the characteristic buzzing resonator, lending a contrasting voice to the balance of the instruments.

8. KEME BUREMA (GUINEA)
Ba Ballo, lead tambour; Sylvain Leroux, second tambour; Keba Cissoko, kora; Famoso Dioufate, bala.

A 19th-century historical song about how the French turned the son of Samori Touré against him. Some of the original lyrics are sung through the fluto.

9. ALLAH L'A KE (GUINEA-BISSAU)
Keba Bobo Cissoko, kora and vocal.

A Mandinka invocation to God and a moral lesson.

Ye Allah l'a Ke, Silan wo don m'a ke. / Kuo be kari bayi le Allah baro, dyonte bayi la / Jaliya le n'yo mada; jaliya mo kan këllenti / Jali ke nin ke te këllenti baba tunya ri dio / Jaliyuso nin te këllenti na tunya ri dio. / Këno du saanse le dunya rotero hara baden këno le wesahbe dandi. / Këno këno nin wodé dunya jama tutukuro tunyala ko. / Hara hëde këno be kasi mo ninfin. / Woye terela komindo tono te wola / Tefili fama ta manyama fanaba cursio doun / Adjin kanta, Adjin tama mese mese / Adjin lo bundala / "Kombara kuman kura kura m", / Yenin folo ke leoley katu moyen, "Yenin folo yen badeny a le ma" / Ada g'na wulu ku walaka / Ado fo folen silama / Adjin badeny wo jenfa / Adjin manamana-kan tola / Na bana naola adi si fonya di jenfa / Wo kaffiri da sibo kuyu to le korondoba / Holo dun i yëëro / Jaliya la n'yo mada, jaliya mo kan këllenti / Jali ke nin ke te këllenti baba tunya ri dio / Jaliyuso nin këllenti na tunya ri dio. / All praise to God, God who created all things. / What God has created, cannot be taken away. / Jaliya is different, jaliya is one voice. / Jali men are different from other men; jali women are different from others too. / There are three birds (spirits) in the world. / The human spirit is the last. / If there is someone you don't know / You can't sympathize with him. / You can tell a liar, he hides in his costume and listens at the door. / "I heard something new," he says, but he doesn't know what he hears. / "I'll tell you a secret, because we're family." / That's the way the liar is, that's the concern of the community. / That's loose talk. / When he's finished his lying he'll need to go out for some air. / Before you talk about others, take care of yourself. / Jaliya is different, jaliya is one voice. / Jali men are different from other men. / Jali women are different from others too.
10. DINIYA (GUINEA)
Djefalma Diabate, voice; Abou Sylla, bala, dundun; Fodé Bangoura, djembe
A song appealing to youth to respect their elders.

Denmisen nu—an nye sôbe don sörômba kola / Ka wola baraka nyînin kan, / Wole ye diamana la sabatîla // Îte tîrîla. / Mô baya tuma ni denmisen nyàtë kelen di. / Alu miri soronba kona yandi. / Mô baya tuma ni denmisen nyatë kelen di. / Alu miri solon jaama kêma yandi. Ah. / Ja dënîna bantôle. / Ilà diamana kêrò, ilà diamana kêrò, ilà diamana kêrò banto. / Í nani falu wolu telen na telene mirila dinin. / Ífana ye lala, ilà diamana ke diban. / Ídô ni kêrò wolu telena telena mirila dinin. / Ífana yelâla ko ilà diamana ke diban. Ah. / Dia kê ambe sômme le dinin. / Ilà diamana kêrò, ilà diamana ke diban...

Young people—submit to the will of your parents, / For the sake of the community. / You won’t regret it. / Age and youth are not the same. / Think of your elders. / Age and youth are not the same. / Think of how you are using your time. Ah. / Your youth will fade one day. / Your life will end. / Your parents remember their youth. / You too will grow old one day. / Those younger than you always take their youth for granted. / But you too will be sure to grow older. Ah. / Good night until tomorrow, my child. / The good times of youth will end...

11. DIJU DE GALINHA (GUINEA-BISSAU)
Keba Cissoko, horns and voice; Famore Dialoubata, bala; Chikako Inwah, voice; Sylvain Lencou, guitar; Rufus Cappadocia, cello; Peter Fand, bass; Stefan Monsen, djembe
A Mandinka-Portuguese creole song from the early 1960s by José Carlos. Originally sung about a Portuguese political prison, it is adapted by Keba Cissoko into a contemporary antiwar song.

Diju de Galinha /// Niyao ajiu de Galinha. /// [Creole] Manera Kolabudoro tehoro tchuba, Asin tamben kunta pensa dinya terra. / Manera ku piskaduros tattara marel, asin tamben kunta pensa dinya terra. / Manera kufiju majo ta pensa die familias, Guinea-Bissau, asin tamben kunta pensa dinya terra. / Manera ku familias ta pensa de si fidju majo, asin tamben kunta pensa dinya terra. [Solos] Keba Bobo Cissoko de Guinea-Bissau bostar do. / En talem bura Gabou sara no vala mego. / En talem bura Bafata Bijimi. / En talem bura Binka Badora. / En talem bura de Kan Chunko sowodi. / En talem bura de Buha Kidi. / En talem bura de Komosi farin beju dindin banko. / En talem bura Bulama, capitale antigu. / En talem bura de Bissau, capitale nandu. / Amin de Cosse Galu Mara bobo... / Naam o Africa /// Nin am mira Liberia un la kele bambo le Africa. / Nin am mira Sierra Leone la kele bambo le Africa. / Nin am mira Guinea-Bissau la kele bambo le Africa. / Alina kaîra dua Africa banko ende duniya? // Na naniya dua jabole beo numo, Africa? / Nata’aro kolu fere kaîra sina n’yame, Africa. / Africa fana dolu tenkus tekerin de duniya. / Nata’aro kolu fere kaîra sina n’yame, Africa.

Galinha Island /// I remember Galinha Island. /// Like the farmers waiting for rain after the dry season, I long for my country. / Like the fishermen waiting for a catch, I long for my country. / Like the migrant worker who travels far from Guinea-Bissau and misses his family, I long for my country. / Like the family that misses its son away for work, I long for my country. [Solos] Keba Bobo Cissoko from Guinea-Bissau greets you. / I remember the Gabou Sara region / I remember Bafata Bijimi. / I remember Binka Badora. / I remember the wealthy Kan Chunko district (where the good hospitals are). / I remember the district of Komosi. / I remember Bulama, the old capital. / I remember Bissau, the new capital. / I come from Cosse Galu Mara. / Africa is calling me. / Oh Africa is calling me. / I’m thinking of what is happening in Liberia. / When is war going to end in Africa? / I’m thinking of what is happening in Sierra Leone. / When is war going to end in Africa? / I’m thinking of what is happening in Guinea-Bissau. / When is war going to end in Africa? / Why don’t we pray for peace and come together as one in Africa? // We pray for peace together in Africa. / In Africa, we don’t have tranquility. / Let’s get together and bring peace to Africa.
FOR FURTHER READING


CREDITS

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